

THE JEWISH DAILY

FORWARD

SHA'AR ZAHAV

שער זהב

JANUARY 1980

from where i stand

Funny how some things just never turn out the way we expect. When I left for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations/National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods Biennial convention in Toronto, I went with the usual concerns: Would this be the time when the wrath of my colleagues would be most openly vented? would I be shunned, made into a pariah? would the hopes of thousands of lesbians and gay men be dashed because rabbis would not listen to a colleague? No matter how enthusiastic I may seem when we meet for services, I still retain an awareness that the world is not yet unanimously on our side. So I attend the various meetings to which I go with varying amounts of trepidation.

Toronto turned out to be another place of awakening. I was literally deluged by rabbis and members of congregations from all corners of North America, who had a variety of concerns that they wanted to air related to questions about homosexuals and homosexuality and Judaism. Questions ranged from how or whether to set up a gay havurah within an existing mainstream congregation to supplying liturgical materials for a Jewish lesbian group being helped by

continued next page

a straight rabbi in the midwest to making myself available to counsel the sibling of a rabbi to sitting with a rabbi who finally came out to me himself. And for those people who didn't want advice or counsel there were lavishings of congratulations and encouragement, both for me and for the congregation on having the courage to be and do what we are and do.

I was reminded more often than I wanted to be that what we stand to gain as a congregation will only be measured by the amount we are prepared to commit to it. We are involved in the most peculiar of phenomena Jews who, by and large, are not involved with mainstream Judaism, who want to effect a synthesis of their Judaism with their sexuality, and who cannot be comfortable "passing" as straight in other congregations. Our synagogue is just barely able to offer the kinds of spiritual and community services that are so desperately needed, and the reasons for this are complex and sometimes contradictory.

I won't go into them at the moment, because I will have mountains more to say on the subject at a later time. But I will say that, returning home from Canada, I have a clearer vision of what I would like to see in our synagogue: 1) a greater sense of community or family; 2) a furthering of our knowledge and practice of Judaism, both within the walls of our regular meeting place and in other places; 3) a verbalizing of the wants and expectations of the members of the congregation regarding our synagogue, so that the Va'ad may guide us in the directions in which you want to go; 4) a growing understanding of how we fit as individuals into our own synagogue, and how we fit as a synagogue into the greater Jewish community and the larger general community; 5) how we can involve more of the people in our own community in reaching some sort of spiritual fulfillment by identifying your/their needs.

In other words, to put it simply, most of the board are relatively new at being on synagogue boards. And being on a synagogue board is different in many ways from any other kind of volunteer involvement. So it becomes much more important that you, as members of the synagogue, let us know your needs and desires for our congregation.

I have few regrets that the 1970's will soon be, or already are, behind us. Just as 5740 was the beginning of a new decade, so is 1980. And, if you think about it, so is every day. When you take the responsibility for making this new decade a better one, you earn the right to take justifiable pride when it turns out for the best.

I believe that Sha'ar Zahav can be the synagogue of the 80's (or the 40's, if you're into Jewish calendar), but only with your active input. Dare to demand. Be prepared to respond. We are there for you. We need you to be there for us. Shall we then count on one another, bind ourselves together as a family, and march into the new decade with direction, commitment and hope? I say yes to all three, and with the help of God, we will see it happen.

Allen

review committee

The rabbi review committee is in the process of evaluating the rabbi's performance. This is a responsibility given to the committee by the Va'ad. The committee needs considerably more input from the congregation in order to make a fair and detailed evaluation.

In order to clarify the task of the committee, we have simply been charged to make recommendations concerning the rabbi's performance in relation to the renewal of his contract. This is a common practice in most congregations. Our committee in no way desires to make any reference to the character of our rabbi; merely to conscientiously and honestly consider his performance.

I strongly urge all members who have worked with our rabbi, or have had contact with him, to submit a written evaluation. Please see me at synagogue or send it to my apartment by January 20th. My address is 309 Walnut Street, San Francisco, 94118. We need to hear from as many members as we can for our report to be constructive and complete. Thank you.

membership

Shalom,

This month I begin our column sadly; I must tell all our members and friends that our co-chair, Bill Goldstein, has submitted his resignation to the Va'ad. He is retaining his membership in the congregation and we must hope that we will continue to see a great deal of him and have the benefit of his talent and labors. Personally, I feel a great loss...and a great need for the help and support of all my Sha'ar Zahav family. It will not be easy for our committee to get along without Bill. As new as I am to the position of co-chair, it will be a huge challenge for me. Our committee is anxious to hear from those members interested in serving on the committee, and we are also soliciting suggestions for a new male co-chair.

We are proud to announce that we are now a family of 85 members and growing every day. We have some exciting plans which we hope, and intend, will make our members happy and proud, and will serve to encourage some of you friends to become members.

I'm sure that on occasion it has occurred to you that you have a great idea for solving one of Sha'ar Zahav's problems, or of some way of making an improvement in the way we do things. You're probably right...it's a great idea, so PLEASE tell us about it!!!

Shalom,
Leila Raim, Co-chair,
Membership Committee

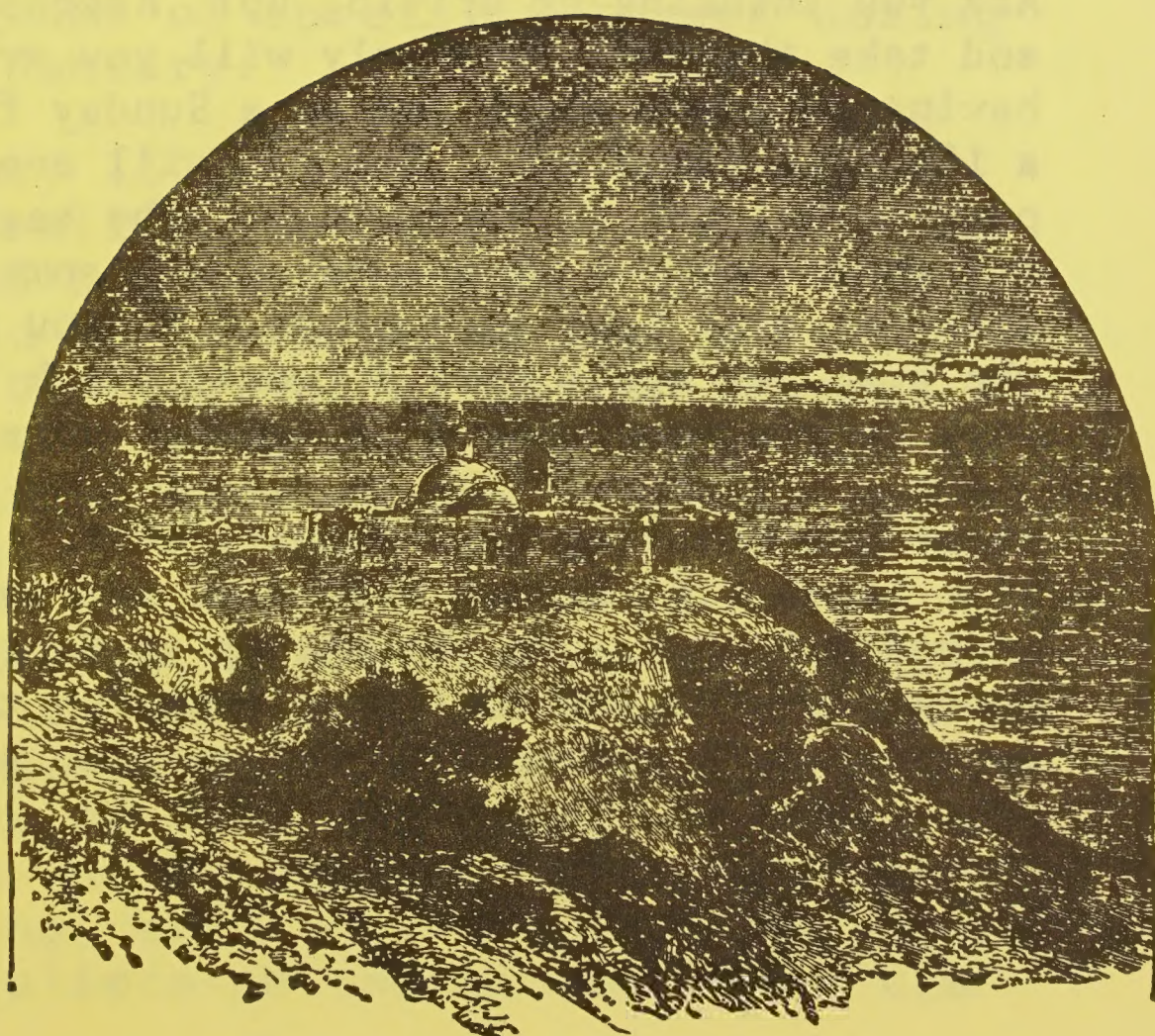
wanted

We are in need of a more permanent pushke (donation box), since our present, tastefully decorated cardboard pushke is suffering from total collapse. Anyone with the talent and a desire to build one for Sha'ar Zahav will be encouraged to do so. Consider it a very worthy mitzvah, as the presence of such a symbol will encourage the others to perform the mitzvah of tzedakah (charity). If you can help us out with this project, or if you need further information, contact Ron Lezell at 861-4776.

genealogy chug

For the past 1½ years I have been tracing my family tree becoming involved in genealogy as a hobby. Although I am by no means an expert genealogist, I have discovered many sources of information which could be useful to other amateur Jewish genealogists. I would be glad to share this information with other members of the congregation who want to begin tracing their roots or who are currently interested in genealogy. If there is enough interest, I would be willing to teach an informal class (chug) in Jewish genealogy. I would also like to talk to anyone else in the congregation who is also tracing their family tree. Either speak to me at services or call me at 282-4435 (home) or 442-7415 (work).

Pete Tannen



5 MONASTERY ON MOUNT CARMEL.

MARCHING ALONG. . .

Plans for the California March on Sacramento for Lesbian and Gay Rights continue at a feverish pace. Latest information we have received indicates that the Sha'ar Zahav Capitol Express will leave San Francisco on Sunday morning, January 13th, around 8:00 a.m. Contingents are expected to arrive and form into groups at the march assembly site at 10:00 a.m. The March will step off promptly at 11:00 a.m. for a twenty block route to the State Capitol. The rally following the march, featuring many well known entertainers and speakers, will end around 3:00 p.m. Our bus(es) will leave Sacramento around 3:30 p.m. and return to San Francisco by dinner time.

Marchers: You may want to bring along a brown-bag brunch or lunch. Also bring a warm jacket; Sacramento can be chilly this time of year.

Are you thinking of driving up? Reconsider, and take the bus. Not only will you avoid having to worry about gas on a Sunday for a 180-mile round trip, but you will avoid parking hassles in Sacramento. The beginning and ending points of the march are some distance away from each other. If you take the bus, you won't have a twenty block hike back to your car when it's time to come home!

About the Lobbying Day, January 14th. Buses will leave S.F. around 8:00 a.m. and return around 6:00 p.m. On the way up to Sacramento Monday morning, we will have lobbying training on the bus, together with information packets.

Even though the San Francisco legislative delegation favors AB 1, San Francisco residents can help fill out groups visiting legislators from other areas, including the members of key committees which must act on the bill before it can reach the Assembly floor. IT IS CRUCIAL THAT THE CAPITOL BE SWARMING WITH LOBBYING CONSTITUENTS ON JANUARY 14th IF WE EVER HOPE TO WIN OUR CIVIL RIGHTS THIS YEAR.

Very important: Anyone, whether or not a member of Sha'ar Zahav, is welcome to come on our buses for the March and Lobbying Day. If you know of anyone who needs transportation for these events, please invite them to join our contingent.

See you in Sacramento! ! !

program

The program committee is pleased to announce two programs of special interest during the month of January:

On January 11, AlBaum, a member of our congregation, will present a program of Gays in Israel. Al has just returned from a trip to Israel, and he has a great deal of information about the current situation of gays in Israel as well as some ideas about how we can be more supportive of our brothers and sisters there.

On January 18, Professor William (Zev) Brinner, of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at U.C. Berkeley will speak to us on the subject of Jews and Arabs. Author of several books on the subject of Judaeo-Arabic. He is also considered one of our country's leading specialists on the situation in the Middle East.

senior outreach

Sha'ar Zahav continued its senior outreach program with a Chanukkah visit to the Hampshire Convalescent Hospital. We were joined by three new congregation members who brought some new ideas with them. They had collected magazines ranging in interest from nature to news, for the Jewish patients we were visiting as well as for others in the Hospital and for the lobby and day room. Needless to say, these were most welcomed.

In addition we brought individual gifts prepared by the San Francisco Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women. These gift packages included writing paper, pens, combs, and even a dreidel. It was like a USO visit to the troops as we schleped in the presents.

This report would not be complete without a word of appreciation to Debbie Goodman of the Jewish Family and Children's Services for her invaluable help as coordinator and supporter of the project.

Our next visit will be for Purim, followed by a Passover visit. These will give us ample opportunities to expand our program. We can use more volunteers so plan to join us then. The dates will be announced in the next FORWARD.

Sam Thal

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"NAZI" CALLS: You should know that there have been phone calls - sometimes anonymous, sometimes with an apparently false name - purporting to be from the Nazi Party, of a threatening nature. Yesterday, a number of such calls were made in the middle of the night, apparently at random, from the telephone book, to some "Bernsteins." A week before, such calls were made to people in the Black community.

None of these calls - now, or in the past - have so far ever had a follow-through. However, it is important to keep the pertinent police unit informed of the pattern, as they continue to try to get leads on it. Please let us know if any of your people tell you about such calls.

oneg

The Congregation would like to thank the following people for their participation, sharing, and sponsoring of Onegs:

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| December 14 | Gordon Osser, celebrating his brother's wedding. |
| December 21 | Jack Lassner for Sam Thal's birthday, and Steven Fritsch-Rudser celebrating the first anniversary of his relationship. |
| December 28 | Michael Freedland, celebrating the purchase of his new house. |
| January 4 | Paul Cohn, celebrating the Yahrzeit of his grandmother Rebecca Rachel Greenberg. |

There is an Oneg committee meeting on Jan 23, at 7:30 to 8:30 at my home, 1833 Hays, San Francisco. Please plan to attend

Shalom

David Gass

of interest

There will be an Interdenominational Pot Luck dinner on January 26, at the Starr King Room, of the Unitarian Church, Franklin and Geary. Please bring a prepared dish and a \$2 donation.

birthdays

We congratulate the following members whose birthdays occur in January:

A. W. Bannowsky: January 6th
Bill Goldstein: January 24th
Aaron Cooper: January 30th

yahrzeits

We will observe the Yahrzeits of the following three loved ones during the month of January:

Sarah Goldstein, mother of Bill Goldstein, on January 3.

Bayla Schnaidman, sister of Daniel Chesir on 6 Tevet,

Rose Auerbach, mother of Stephen Auerbach, on January 23rd.

services

The following members will be conducting worship services on Friday nights in January at Sha'ar Zahav:

January 4: Scott Klein

January 11: to be announced

January 18: Rabbi Allen Bennett

January 25: Laurie Radovsky and David Gass

donations

We are very grateful to the following people for making donations to Sha'ar Zahav within the last two months:

Mike Begley
Jeffrey Berenson and Mima Cohen
Herb Cohn
Aaron Cooper
Stanley and Gloria Gass
John Golebowski
Robert Kravitz
Walt Leiss
Anthony Gardiner Beauregard Lowell IV
Robert L. Nefsky
Bernard Pechter
Gerry Rosenstein
Alan Schrager
Roy Simon
Victor Spingolo
Marie and Lew Winston

The variety of reasons for which people are making donations to Sha'ar Zahav continues to grow. Contributions to the general fund, as well as to the Building, Prayerbook, and Harvey Milk Memorial Funds, are excellent ways in which to remember significant people and occasions. Won't you honor or memorialize someone with a contribution to your synagogue in their name?

If you would like to make a donation to the Congregation in honor of an event, (moving into a new home, buying a new car, celebrating a birthday, anniversary, etc.,) or a person (family member, other loved one, etc.), or in memory of someone or some event, all such contributions will be gratefully accepted. Contributions in any amount (\$2.00 minimum) will be most welcome. If you would prefer that we not acknowledge your contribution in the FORWARD, please indicate that on your check or in the note enclosed with it.

dance

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is sponsoring a dance with the title "The Turning Point" on January 12th at 8:00 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center. The dance is open to the entire community. Tickets are on sale now. Prices will be: \$3.00 for members, \$4.00 for non-members, and \$5.00 for couples. Tickets will be available at Friday night services, and by calling the telephone numbers at the end of this notice. Music will be provided by the world-famous Hot Borscht, a group well-known in the Bay Area for their versatility in disco, Jewish, and slow music. Beer, wine, and soft drinks will be served at a nominal price. Free child care will be provided during the dance. For more information and for tickets, call Mike at 928-1255, or Sandy at 474-8405

reminder

Just a reminder, if you have recently moved or, more importantly, are planning to move, please send a change of address card to our Congregation at P. O. Box 5640, San Francisco, CA 94101 right away. Otherwise, it costs us 25¢ to get your change of address from the Post Office.

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congregation sha'ar zahav

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